The Valley Patriot

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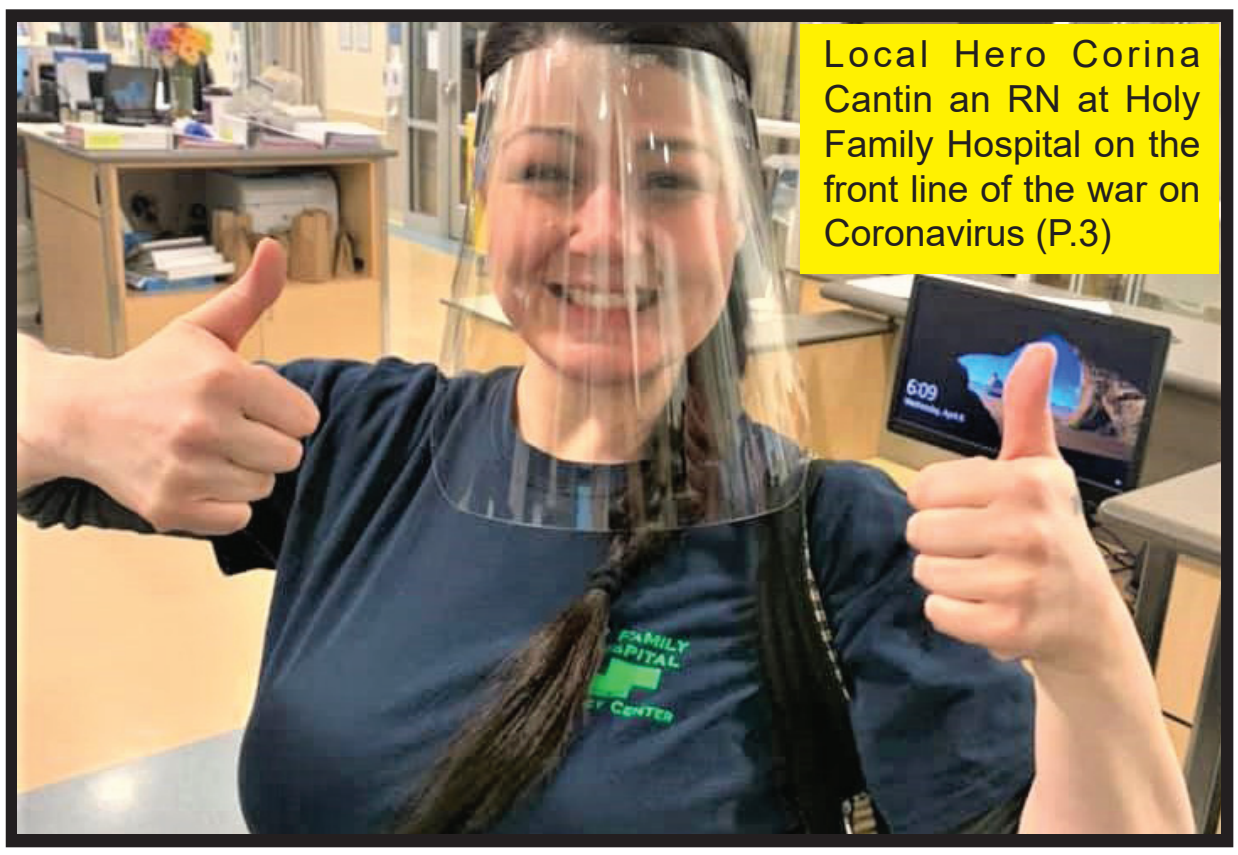

Local Hero Corina Cantin an RN at Holy Family Hospital on the front line of the war on Coronavirus (P.3)

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The Valley Patriot BASH HAS BEEN POSTPONED

Valley Patriot of the Month

USAF Veteran Larry Giordano; Leadership and Discipline

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

Originally from Everett, Massachusetts, Methuen's Larry Giordano is one of those rare individuals who usually says "yes". His life epitomizes President John Kennedy's famous quote; "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try". He is a Veteran of the US Air Force, and after leaving the Air Force, worked at an Everett Gas Station, later working at General Electric as a firefighter. General Electric maintained their own private Fire Department at the time. Larry was recently honored with the 2020 Judge John E. Fenton Citizenship Award by the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Mainly honored for his work with foster children, he also served our community as a Methuen Police Officer, Methuen City Councilor, Massachusetts State Representative, Massachusetts State Public Safety Commissioner, and finished his career in public service working in the Essex County Sheriff's Office, all in addition to running the Methuen Karate Association.

What drew me to writing about Larry was his childhood experience as a foster child growing up in Everett and graduating from Everett High School. After high school, like many Americans, Larry joined the US Military, serving in Texas, Mississippi, and Germany with the US Air Force. Author Dr. Jamie Schwandt, a foster child himself, in his book, "Succeeding as a Foster Child: A Roadmap to Overcoming Obstacles and Achieving Success" writes on how children in foster care can more easily overcome difficulties and obstacles that military recruits encounter.

Dr. Schwandt outlines five traits shared by most foster children that serve them well in US Military service. "Being comfortable with the uncomfortable", coming into work, and finding out you're going on deployment or TDY to replace an ill teammate. "Adapt, persist, and recover" falling off an obstacle course, and picking yourself up and getting back on. "Resiliency", children end up in foster care for a myriad of reasons. When they encounter problems and challenges in the Military, they are often better equipment to handle the situation. "Family", foster children understand that brothers and sisters often do not share DNA and can thrive in the close environment of many Military units. "Leadership and Discipline", self-determination and self-discipline is instilled in foster children and helps them thrive in the modern US Military.

Larry Giordano completed Basic Military Training at Lackland Airforce Base in Texas, and advanced Training as a Crash/Rescue Firefighter at Greenville Air Force Base in Mississippi. After training to be an Air Force Firefighter, he was sent to Sembach Air Force Base in Germany, as part of NATO. The mission of this base was to protect Western Europe from Russian aggression. His roommate, another Airman, Joe Griffin from New Jersey introduced him to Karate, while serving together in Germany. He started training in the sport while still in the US Air Force. Larry and his roommate took lessons at the same Karate studio that Elvis Presley studied at while he was in Germany with the US Army.

This chance roommate assignment led to a fifty-three-year career in Karate. Larry is most proud of coaching a US Team at the World Championships in

HERO: PAGE 21

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Drunk with Power Politician Show Their True Colors

It's clear now that we are more than 14 weeks into a national shutdown that the American people were lied to ... again!

Back in December we were told by "experts" that the Coronavirus could not be transmitted from human to human. That turned out not to be true.

Dr. Fauci himself (the presidents leading "expert") said back in December that we should not be worried about Coronavirus, instead we should worry about the newest strain of the flu. That wasn't true.

We were told by the Surgeon General and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that the public should NOT wear masks, because wearing a mask increases the chance of getting the Coronavirus. That was a lie told to prevent a shortage of masks that were needed by health care workers and medical professionals. Now that there is ample supply, the CDC is recommending everyone wear a mask to stop the spread of the virus. No apology given.

Then we were told the virus was not all that infectious, but that the death rate for those who get the virus was extremely high. This was used to justify shutting down the entire country.

Today, we know this was not only wrong, but the opposite is true. The Coronavirus is extremely infectious, but the risk of death for average Americans is only about 1% when you factor in that most deaths from Coronavirus affected the elderly in nursing homes and those with preexisting health conditions.

A full 98.5% of the people who get the virus show no symptoms, do not get sick, or recover completely.

So, why did we shut down America? Why are millions of people still locked in their homes? Why did we destroy the greatest economy in the history of mankind?

The shills of conformity and corporate greed in the media tell us every day that we have to listen to the "science" and the "experts". What they don't tell us is that there is no science or data showing a national lockdown stops the spread or lethality of this virus or any virus. None.

Yet, no matter how many times our politicians and so called "experts" lie to us or simply get it wrong, most of the American public continues to believe what they are told and comply with whatever they are told to do.

This kind of willful conformity in the name of "health" and "safety" is a recipe for tyranny that is being played out all across the country.

In the name of social distancing governors across America are enacting unconstitutional executive orders that have nothing to do with social distancing.

A man in California is arrested for surfing alone in the ocean. In Colorado a man is arrested for fishing in rowboat by himself. A Wisconsin father is arrested for playing catch with his daughter a full 10 feet away. This has nothing to do with social distancing or "science" it has to do with politicians drunk with power, taking advantage of the crisis and lying in order to do so.

Given the number of lies we have been told over the years it is downright scary that the American public so willingly give up their rights simply because experts or elected officials told us to

Just think of the major lies we've been told over the years.

We were told that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, that if we liked our doctor we could keep our doctor, that Bill Clinton "did not have sex with that woman", that we could read the lips of George H.W. Bush's when said "no new taxes", that Trump was a secret Russian spy who stole the 2016 election, and that ISIS in Syria was the JV team of Al Quaida terrorists.

The fact is politicians and experts are people. They are not gods. They lie, they scheme, and they have agendas.

It's time for the American people to start thinking for ourselves and stop blindly doing what we are told.

It's time to reopen America and stop bowing to those in charge.

Otherwise we won't have a country left to open, and our constitution will be null and void.

Thank You, Frontline Workers!

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

During these challenging and unprecedented times, the Merrimack Valley has shown time and again that we are willing to rise to the occasion to help those in need. Businesses, manufacturers, community organizations, government agencies, and residents have all stepped up to provide services, donations, and financial relief to those who need support.

Our health care workers and first responders are putting our lives before theirs and those of their loved ones every day. They have gone to war for us – we salute you and we thank you on behalf of those we love. The Massachusetts House of Representatives and the Governor are continuing to find ways to protect and support you.

Throughout the Merrimack Valley, the examples of community collaboration are endless, such as the partnership between the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, Clear Path for Veterans New England, and the City of Methuen's Methuen Cares initiative to support local Veterans. This collaboration provides meal kits for Veterans through the Food4Vets program, and in 2 short weeks, they distributed over 3,000 meals to Veterans in the Merrimack Valley. The Veterans Northeast Outreach Center of Haverhill is also working with the Military Support Foundation to provide food for Veterans through biweekly distribution drives at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill.

In my capacity as Chair of the Legislative Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs, I have been deeply involved with the operations of the Massachusetts National Guard. They are providing excellent care and support to the Veterans at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home after they were brought in to address the crisis. They are now deployed to assist with many aspects of the state's COVID-19 response, including testing, distributing personal protective equipment (PPE), and supporting medical facilities and law enforcement. Over 1,900 National Guard members are currently deployed in Massachusetts. Their efforts to conduct mobile testing in our nursing homes and long-term care facilities have made a big difference in protecting vulnerable seniors and helping the state know where more resources are needed.

The state has also brought on board many new health care workers, volunteers, and field hospital staff that have been essential for quickly expanding our health care capacity to handle the surge of the pandemic. Because many of these new workers are not covered by existing liability protections, the State Legislature passed a new law extending legal protections to all good faith health care workers, health care facilities, and volunteer organizations involved with the COVID-19 response effort. The law balances worker protections with patients' rights, clarifying that protections do not apply in cases of negligence, recklessness, discrimination, intent to harm, or consumer complaints brought by the Attorney General.

Our state government continues to find ways to support our frontline workers through this crisis, by offering priority testing, emergency childcare, wage increases, and more. State resources for frontline workers can be found at www.frontlinema.org. To our frontline workers – your contributions do not go unnoticed. We salute you and thank you!

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature and serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. She can be reached at Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2380. ◊

JOEL'S METHUEN FOOD CORNER

Pdubz Pizza and Wings

Joel Faretra
VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST

I think we all underestimated how much we all enjoyed sitting down at a restaurant or going to a bar, ordering a beer or two, getting some appetizers while playing Keno, and watching a game at your favorite watering hole, or going out to dinner with your significant other.

We all cannot wait to get the word that our favorite places will be open for dine-in soon!

As many bars and restaurants have altered their business model to take out and delivery or have closed temporarily, a new place has opened in Methuen.

Pdubz Pizza and Wings has opened in the spot that Vinny's Starhaven and Scraps occupied on Prospect Street (687 Prospect St. to be exact). They are open for take-out of delivery from 4 pm-9 pm Sunday-Tuesday and 4 pm-10 pm Wednesday through Saturday.

You can visit www.pdubz.com to order online and to look at their menu or call them at (978) 208-0911 to place an order.

Since the family is always in search of good wings, we decided we needed to give it a try. A surprise when we looked at the menu was no subs. There are wings (15 different flavors!), pizza, calzones, and salads/sides. We ordered a calzone, a pizza, and 5 different types of wings. Here is the breakdown of each…

Wings- The menu could give you a bit of a panic attack with 15 different options. The wings are not breaded and they are very good sized. We ordered the buffalo, mango habanero, gold rush, Hawaiian teriyaki, and the bourbon. The buffalo was great! They definitely had some kick to them. They have a hot buffalo which we will definitely try the next time. They did come with packets of Ken's Blue Cheese dressing instead of a container to dip them in. The surprise out of the group was the Hawaiian teriyaki, which blew my expectations out of the water. They came with chunks of pineapple and the marinade was sweet! The mango habanero was extremely spicy but the sweetness of the mango did compliment it very nicely. Blue cheese is a great compliment to these wings. Goldrush had a lot of sauce and had some sweetness to it, similar to the sauce at the Ninety-Nine. The bourbon wings were alright but didn't compare to the above mentioned.

4.5 Beards!!!

Pizza- my oldest daughter is a vegetarian so she wasn't thrilled with the wing order so she picked the pizza. We went with the white pizza. It was three kinds of cheese (mozzarella, Monterey jack, and cheddar) with a butter garlic

FOOD: PAGE 5

Corina Cantin an RN at Holy Family Hospital in Methuen shows off the masks that were donated by Killorglin Creations. Killorglin has been busy making masks for first responders and healthcare workers during COVID-19 and now, they are opening up sales to the public! You can purchase your own plastic face shields straight from them online. And, if you're looking for multiple, they are discounting the price for quantities of 5+ and 10+.Check them out online now: https://kcgifts.net

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If you drive by our Central Fire Station on Lowell Street in Methuen, you will see that the department is proudly flying 4 Methuen Rangers flags. The flags are being sold by the Methuen Ranger Boosters and the 2020 MHS senior class. The seniors' final year of high school has been interrupted by the COVID-19 crisis. Please consider purchasing a flag for $20.00 to support our senior class and raise their spirits. If you are interested in purchasing a flag, contact Bill Bryant at 978-609-6199.

Chick-fil-A is still offering a free entre to health care workers and first responders in the Merrimack Valley. Just pull up to the drive up window with an ID showing you are a first responder, home health worker etc.

IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

Helping Our Veterans During the COVID-19 Emergency

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

Among the communities my team has been focused on helping through this pandemic are our veterans – the men and women who answered this nation's call to serve, protect and defend its freedom through their patriotic action. As we witness many of our veterans enduring physical and mental health struggles, disabilities, financial hardship and difficulty transitioning to civilian life and jobs, it is incumbent upon us to return to them that level of commitment. We have passed new laws in recent years designed to help our veterans in Massachusetts but there remains much work to be done.

That is why, during this emergency, I have filed a new bill, An Act providing COVID-19 emergency financial relief for veterans.

This legislation supplements chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, which is focused on all things pertaining to veterans' benefits in the Commonwealth. The Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), in partnership with local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs), administers a program of financial assistance for food, housing, fuel, clothing and medical care for veterans and their dependents with limited income and assets. This bill bolsters that aid, as the COVID-19 emergency has created tremendous financial distress for our veterans well beyond the scope of chapter 115. Massachusetts has over 300,000 veterans but the most recent state audit of DVS in 2017 found that less than 15,000 had received benefits under this chapter in recent years. With the filing of this bill, it is my hope that it will shine a spotlight on those benefits for veterans who are eligible and encourage them to apply.

Part of the process of applying and qualifying for chapter 115 benefits includes being interviewed by our VSOs. As municipal buildings are closed and access to our VSOs more limited, we must find other ways to provide the financial relief our veterans need and to which they are entitled. This bill provides quick-turnaround, emergency one-time grants for veterans as they navigate other resources provided by the state and the federal government.

I also filed this bill to acknowledge the constraints our cities and towns are facing with respect to their local budgets due to COVID-19 as they try to plan for the 2021 fiscal year. Chapter 115 benefits are funded 25% by our municipalities. It is imperative that the state provide supplemental assistance to veterans in need without increasing the financial burden being placed on our cities and towns. The bill authorizes the Secretary of DVS to create regulations for the timely and effective implementation of the bill. By streamlining the process for these emergency grants through DVS, these funds will be distributed more rapidly than the process under chapter 115 can currently provide.

This is a bill that will not only provide our veterans with much needed emergency aid but also start a long overdue conversation about how our veterans are currently accessing benefits and how we can make this system more efficient and effective in its service to those who served us.

All of us, today and every day, should make it our duty to show gratitude to all service members, to those now in uniform and to those who served this nation in the past. Let us support the brave men and women who have served to keep us free by passing this important legislation.

If you have questions about this bill or any other issue – or need assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic - please contact me and my team anytime via email at diana.dizoglio@masenate.gov or phone 978-984-7747.

Yours in service,
Diana ◊

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The Valley Patriot can be found in more than 800 locations in 48 communities in Massachusetts and NH.

The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition, are opinion pieces.

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Local daily news updates online at valleypatriot.com or facebook.com/valleypatriot

Thanks so much to 11 year-old Adrianna Sabounji of Methuen who dropped off some incredibly delicious cookies to The Methuen Firefighters this month. Adrianna is an amazingly gifted baker, and MFD thanks her for sharing her talents in appreciation of the department. The cookies were awesome! Check out her other creations at Adri's Town Bakery on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/Adris-Town-Bakery-320794405542466

FOOD: FROM PAGE 2

sauce. When we opened the box, it was covered in grease so we were nervous at first. It was all uphill from there. Really good crust and the pizza wasn't dripping grease. It could have a bit more of the butter garlic sauce as it was close to being cheesy bread. You can order a side of the butter garlic sauce and it is perfect to dip your crust in! That was a definite game changer!!!

They have about 20 specialty pizzas on the menu along with your traditional toppings.

3.5 Beards

Calzone- a friend of mine went with a specialty pizza of theirs before we ordered called the KBR (Kyle's Buffalo Ranch) so we decided to try it as a calzone. Would have liked to see it as spicy as the wings but it was good nonetheless. I would have liked to see more chicken in the calzone but the butter garlic side made up for it as we were able to dip the doughy ends into the sauce. Definite room for improvement.

3 Beards

They do have a long list of salads and appetizers. I did not get it but have heard from a good friend that the poutine is very good! We will be trying the garlic knots since the garlic butter sauce is great!

The overall rating is 4 beards because the wings are that good!

Hopefully, we are in a spot next month that we will be able to get out and visit our favorite places again! Feel free to send me any feedback or recommendations for a future column to jfaretra67@gmail.com ◊

WEATHER 101 with AL KAPRIELIAN

Welcome to May with the continuation of longer days, shorter nights, and the increasing sun angle. As the sun angle continues to get higher we should see the daily high temperatures increase as we go through the month. Recapping April it was a chilly and wet month and measurable snow also occurred. We saw more snow in April compared to February!!

This is unusual as in a normal winter we would see more snow occur in February versus April.

Why the rain snow & cold in April??

The answer is the position of the jet stream. During this past January, February into the beginning of March, the jet stream was moving from west to east up in northern Canada. This put our region on the milder and snowless side of the jet stream.

Remember the jet stream are winds in the upper atmosphere. When the jet stream is tracking north of our region (well north this past winter) we are on the milder south side of the jet stream. As a result of this we did not see any large coastal storms during the main part of the winter season. During the middle of March, a change occurred in the position of the jet stream, a little too late for skiing and other winter sports. This change was a southward shift in the track of the jet stream.

The jet stream even tracked south of New England causing the colder air to move even farther south than our area. This cold air was blocked during the winter months because of the jet stream being across northern Canada.

As late March and April arrived, we saw much colder air along with more coastal storms. With the jet stream south of our area, during this time, we started to see coastal low-pressure systems move more slowly across the east coast and New England. The reason for this was the development of the Greenland high pressure system (Greenland high) which acted like a block from Greenland southward to the northern & western Atlantic Ocean. This caused low pressure systems to move slower and also time to get stronger. The stronger coastal storms gave us more wind as the storms occurred in late March and April. This new jet stream position was more like what we should see during the winter months. The Greenland high keeping the jet stream to our south and also causing coastal storms to move more slowly due to blocking.

If this new weather pattern occurred in January and February, we would have seen a lot of snow and cold temperatures. Not this past winter, maybe next winter??? As a result of this new weather pattern, many areas including Boston, had temperatures colder than normal for April. In fact, Boston's highest temperature in April was 62 degrees. This was a new record low maximum temperature in Boston for April. Areas inland from Boston MetroWest and points west and north into interior NH were a lot warmer. Ocean temperatures were in the middle 40s in April and this did not help Boston, Cape Cod, & the islands and coastal areas to warm up.

On Monday April 13th it was an active weather day with some heavy rain and strong winds. During that evening a line of thunderstorms developed and became potent with even some large hail. With cold air aloft this can cause hail to form with thunderstorms. Worcester County had .75" to 1-inch diameter hail. Haverhill had .75" diameter hail. Woonsocket, RI had 1 inch diameter hail. New Bedford had .75" to 1-inch diameter hail. Strong wind gusts occurred during the afternoon and evening on April 13th. Some wind gusts were as follows: Bradford, MA 54 miles per hour, Methuen 51 miles per hour, Lawrence Airport 48 miles per hour, Lynn 51 miles per hour, and Beverly airport 47 miles per hour. Some even higher gusts occurred. They are as follows: East Falmouth, MA 67 miles per hour, Fall River 64 miles per hour, and Taunton 63 miles per hour,

Fairhaven 62 miles per hour, Duxbury, MA 72 miles per hour, the jackpot was Milton MA 80 miles per hour; this is higher than hurricane force winds which are 74 miles per hour and greater. Some power outages occurred due to these strong winds. Then we saw measurable snow on April 17th into the 18th. Worcester County had 5-6 inches. Even Sudbury MA farther east had 3.5" of snow. Much less snow occurred in southern

New Hampshire because they were further away from the storm. With this time of year, the snow was heavy and wet which adds weight to trees and power lines which can cause them to fall. Some

NORTH ANOVER ELECTIONS

Helan Pickard

Rivera orders MASKS

SABA DOESN"T WANT TO DO HIS JOB

McCARTY AND THAT SECRET INVESTIGATION

STILL NO VOTE ON POLICE CONTRACT

DeNARO: HAVERHILL POLICE WON'T ENFORCE UNCONSTITUTIONAL ORDERS

METHUEN'S $500 LITTERING FINE

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

Kettle Pizza

Vinnie Pesce of Zanni and Pesce Law Office in Methuen won a kettle pizza grill cover at the Valley Patriot BASH three years ago, and says it still comes in handy, especially during the coronavirus lockdown. The Pesce's say its the best pizza they ever had. For more on kettle pizza visit kettlepizza.com

Fuel Assistance Deadline Extended to May 29

The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. will be accepting applications for fuel assistance through May 29.

The date has been extended past the original April 30 deadline.

Funding is available to help pay a portion of winter heating bills for income-eligible households in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover, Reading and North Reading.

Residents are encouraged to apply even if they work, live in subsidized housing, or if utilities are covered through rent.

Eligibility is based on household size and the gross annual income of every household member, 18 years of age or older.

GLCAC's offices remain closed to the public due to the COVID19 pandemic, however staff is available to assist clients by phone and email.

For more information, call 978-681-4950 or email Gerald Walsh at gcwalsh@glcac.org or Ada Figueroa at afigueroa@glcac.org.

Paperwork can be dropped off in the drop box outside GLCAC's 305 Essex St. offices.

GLCAC is a multi-faceted social services agency that assisted 32,648 individuals in 2018 through a range of programs including early childhood education, fuel assistance, WIC nutrition assistance, immigration services, lead poisoning prevention, child abuse prevention, English-language lessons, and consumer protection.

Newburyport Bank Charitable Foundation Donates $5,000 to the Essex County COVID-19 Response Fund

Newburyport, MA – The Newburyport Bank Charitable Foundation has donated $5,000 to the Essex County Community Foundation in support of its Essex County COVID-19 Response Fund. The Fund's mission is to support community-based organizations on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak response. In collaboration with funders, government agencies and business partners, the Fund will provide financial resources to nonprofit organizations working with communities that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and its economic consequences.

CONTINUED UNDER FREDDIE

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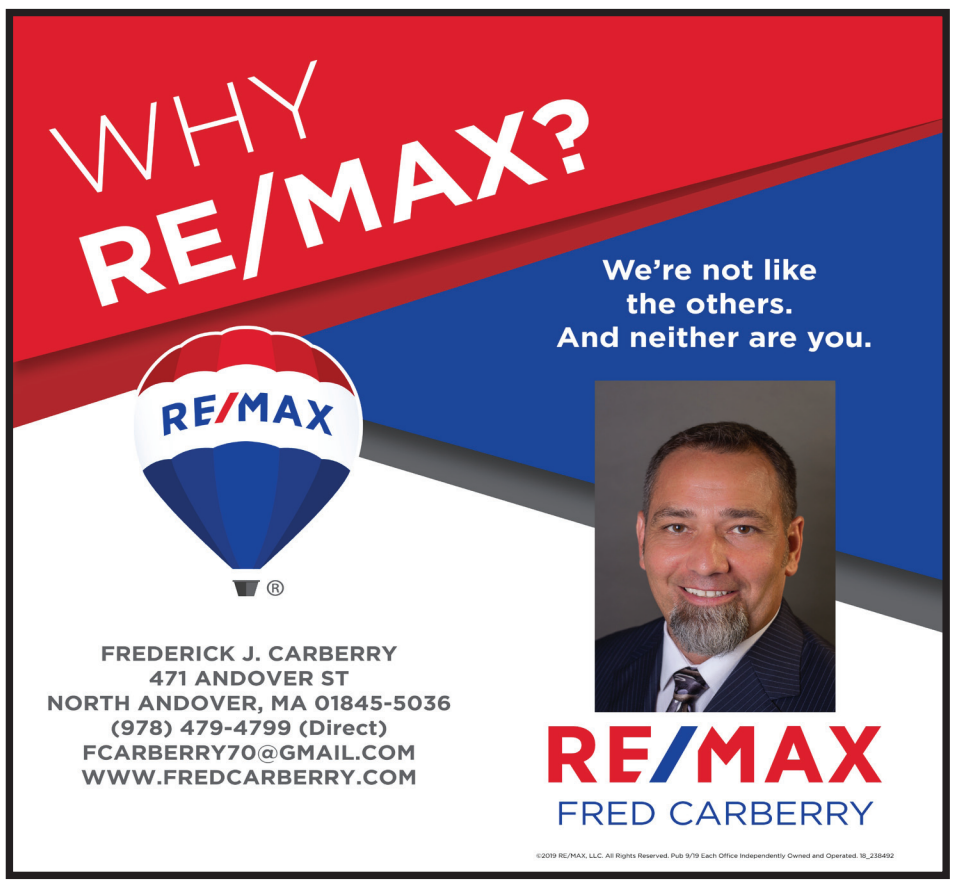

Your Health with Rick Bellanti

Stuck At Home And Going Banana's

Rick Bellanti
HEALTH & WELLNESS COLUMNIST

For as long as I can remember, I've been hearing that it's important to increase fresh fruits in our daily diet. There are many reasons why we should be doing this, fruits contain vitamins, minerals, and fiber that may help protect you from chronic illness. Just like vegetables, fruits have been shown to help protect us against heart disease, stroke, certain types of cancer, gastrointestinal issues, high blood pressure, eye disease and more. The bottom line is some added fruit to your diet is beneficial to your good health.

With all its added vitamins and minerals, incorporating fruit into your daily diet will help boost your immune health. Helping to ward off certain viruses, upper respiratory infections and slow down the aging process. Along with the essential vitamins and minerals that come along with eating fruit there's fiber. The fiber in fruits fills us up, which in turn should help us eat less, and hopefully aid in our weight loss.

My favorite fruit is and has always been the basic yellow banana!

The banana has always been a controversial fruit in the dieting world for as long as I can remember. It is very confusing, until you realize what a banana will do for you depending on your dietary needs. Bananas contain very little fat, about 0.5g per medium fruit, meaning they are suitable as part of a low fat or calorie controlled diet.

Speaking of calories, bananas, as with most fruits, are incredibly nutritious and can contribute to a healthy, balanced diet. If you are on a low-calorie weight loss diet, bananas are a great choice for a quick snack. Bananas are relatively higher than most fruits when it comes to carbohydrates (26 Carbs) and sugar (14 grams), so most people avoid them, but they are not as bad as you may think. A medium sized ripe banana comes in at just under 100 calories.

For a moment, let's talk about the Low Glycemic Index in that medium size banana along with the fiber (there is approximately 3 grams of fiber in one banana) which contributes to you feeling fuller longer. Although bananas are relatively high in carbohydrate or sugar, the effect that they have on blood sugar levels is relatively good. For example, some high carbohydrate foods are high Glycemic, causing a sharp up in blood sugar levels followed by a very fast drop, bananas are low GI and result in a more moderate increase in blood sugar levels that stays constant for longer. (The Glycemic ranking of carbohydrates in foods according to how they affect the blood glucose level and carbohydrates with low Glycemic value are absorbed more slowly and cause a slower and affective lower rise in blood glucose levels).

Very important for patients like me of Type II Diabetes as blood sugar levels are maintained for a longer period. This makes a banana a great quick snack food that will keep you fuller for longer and help you to avoid snacking on high calorie foods or overeating throughout the day, which is a key factor in any weight loss diet.

Bananas are especially high in Potassium, which is an essential mineral in the body and is required for body systems, including the cardiovascular, nervous, digestive, renal systems, to function correctly. A large banana contains about 400mg of potassium. Apart from potassium, bananas are high in a wide variety of beneficial nutrients such as vitamin A, a range of B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium and calcium. Bananas are the highest fruit source of vitamin B6, a nutrient that helps with neurotransmitter production, with a medium banana providing about 25% of the daily recommended intake. A banana provides about 10% of the daily requirement for an adult in terms of vitamin C intake. This vitamin is an important antioxidant in the body, but is also required for building collagen, which is an important connective structure in the body.

High fiber diets have also been linked to reduced risk of lifestyle diseases such as type 2 diabetes and even some types of cancer. Bananas are one of the best fruits in terms of fiber content, containing good levels of both insoluble and soluble fiber. Insoluble fiber has been indicated as important for maintaining good gut health, whilst soluble, is thought to have benefits for the heart and cardiovascular systems.

While you are home social distancing and quite possibly overindulging with food and snacks, grab a banana, the high fiber, low calorie, making you feel fuller, snack. Let's not forget the best part of all, tasting great, making them the ideal pandemic food, helping you relax and put you in a good mood. Just remember to eat it as is, so no famous deep fried Peanut Butter sandwiches made famous by Elvis, or Banana Split Ice Cream desserts. Stay safe and healthy everyone.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 160lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here. ◊

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DiZoglio Files COVID-19 Emergency Veteran Relief Bill

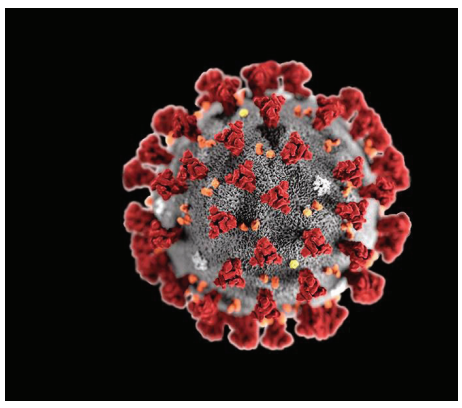
On Tuesday, April 28, State Senator Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen) filed new legislation, An Act providing COVID-19 emergency financial relief for veterans, to provide one-time emergency financial relief grants to Massachusetts veterans suffering demonstrable financial loss due to COVID-19.

Under chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws, which covers veterans' benefits in the Commonwealth, the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), in partnership with local Veterans' Service Officers (VSOs), administers a program of financial assistance for food, housing, fuel, clothing and medical care for veterans and their dependents with limited income and assets. This legislation supplements that aid as COVID-19 has created financial distress for Massachusetts veterans well beyond the scope of chapter 115.

In addition, social distancing has created obstacles to readily accessing chapter 115 benefits. Part of the process of applying and qualifying for chapter 115 benefits includes being interviewed by VSOs. With municipal buildings closed and access to VSOs more limited, the bill is designed to provide quick-turnaround financial breathing room for veterans as they navigate other resources provided by the state and the federal government.

DiZoglio also filed the bill to acknowledge constraints municipalities are facing with respect to their local budgets due to COVID-19 as they try to plan for the 2021 fiscal year. Chapter 115 benefits are funded 25% by cities and towns. The bill authorizes the Secretary of DVS to create regulations for the timely and effective implementation of the bill. By streamlining the process for these emergency grants through DVS, the goal is to have these funds distributed more rapidly than the process under chapter 115 can currently provide, while avoiding placing additional financial burdens on the municipalities.

"This is a bill that will not only provide our veterans with much needed emergency aid but also start a long overdue



conversation about how our veterans are currently accessing benefits and how we can make this system more efficient and effective in its service to those who served us," said DiZoglio. "All of us should make it our duty to show gratitude to all service members, to those now in uniform and to those who served this nation in the past. Let's support the brave men and women who have served to keep us free by passing this important legislation."

"Veterans have proven particularly vulnerable in this crisis," said Haverhill resident and Vietnam veteran Ralph Basiliere, who originally contacted DiZoglio about the issue and pointed to a similar proposal that already passed in Minnesota. "Efforts to aid them are desperately needed."

"I am truly grateful to Senator DiZoglio for advocating for our veterans," said Amesbury Mayor Kassandra Gove. "The Amesbury Veteran Services Office has remained open throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, working closely with our veterans to ensure that they continue to receive these important benefits and have access to information and resources. In past times of economic hardship we have seen an increase in applications for Chapter 115 benefits, and as we continue to make sure that we are taking care of everyone in our community, this bill is a great step forward to help more veterans. This bill not only expands on Chapter 115 for veterans, but it also ensures that our community receives reimbursements faster, which is important for everyone in these uncertain financial times." ◊

Re-opening Advisory Board

Tram Nguyen
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Recently, we received encouraging news that Governor Baker has established a Re-opening Advisory Board chartered to develop a strategy to re-open Massachusetts safely. The Board, comprised of public health officials, municipal and business leaders with various insights and experience, is to present their plan by May 18th. While this is a promising update, we must each maintain the personal discipline required to adhere to masks and social distancing and be ready for the potentially expanded protocols required for a safe re-opening. It is important to remember that we still have a long way to go to reach the point where we can safely re-establish our former daily routines.

Covid-19 science and data is evolving in real time – each day we become better equipped to contain and manage the virus. And it is this science and data from the experts that must drive the decision-making process. As I write this, across the United States, over 1,000,000 people have tested positive, nearly 60,000 have died; and more than 120,000 have recovered. Many states are already re-opening, and the experiences in these locations should also influence Massachusetts' decision making.

The people of Massachusetts and the Merrimack Valley have shown tremendous resilience and strength in following the protocols that have kept so many healthy. Yet, nearly 60,000 of our fellow residents have tested positive for the virus, and we have lost more than 3,000 souls. The heartache for those who have lost loved ones must be an even greater source of sorrow for them, without the comfort of family and friends to share in the traditional ceremonies. I hope that one day soon we can acknowledge this loss with a statewide remembrance event.

The kindness freely given to family, friends, and neighbors is comforting and should be a source of pride for all of us. Here in the Merrimack Valley, encouraging words chalked on driveways and sidewalks, signs thanking First Responders, young people delivering groceries, buying pizza for Lawrence General Hospital's Covid-19 healthcare workers and raising money for those in need is occurring every day. Sewers making hundreds of face masks, others making face shields with their 3D printers, Meals on Wheels continuing to serve our seniors, and the local YMCA distributing more than 10,500 Grab and Go Meals is the evidence of the spirit and compassion of the Merrimack Valley. Through your determination, we have gotten this far, I know we can continue to step up and help each other till happier times return. Until then, thank you for all you are doing – please continue to stay safe.

Representative Tram Nguyen advocates for the people of the 18th Essex District, which includes parts of Boxford, North Andover, Andover, and Tewksbury. ◊

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Arbitrator Reduces Suspension, Reinstates Methuen Cop After Ruling Him "Incompetent"

Ethics Commission Faults Former Methuen Councilors; Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler

Commission finds Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler violated conflict of interest law by voting on police superior officer's contract

The State Ethics Commission has issued Public Education Letters (written reprimand) to former Methuen City Councilors James Atkinson, James Jajuga, and Lynn Vidler.

The commission said they believe the former councilors violated the state conflict of interest law when they participated in two 2017 City Council votes to approve the Methuen Police Department Superior Officers' collective bargaining agreement (CBA).

According to the letters, the three former councilors relied on incorrect legal advice from the Methuen city solicitor when they voted on the Superior Officers' CBA.

The conflict of interest law prohibits municipal employees, including elected officials, from participating officially in matters involving their own financial interests, those of an immediate family member, or those of an organization with which they have an arrangement for future employment.

In rare circumstances, however, when an elected board is legally required to act on a matter, when it is not possible to reach a quorum of board members without conflicts of interest, and when there is no other governmental body that can act on the matter, the board may invoke the judicially created "Rule of Necessity" to allow the conflicted members to participate.

According to the letters, Atkinson, Jajuga and Vidler were prohibited from voting on the Superior Officers' CBA because at the time of the votes, Atkinson had a pending offer to work for the Methuen Police Department, and Jajuga's son and Vidler's husband were superior officers in the Department.

Relying upon erroneous advice from the city solicitor, however, the City Council improperly invoked the Rule of Necessity and Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler voted on the CBA in a pair of September 2017 votes.

With Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler participating, the City Council on September 18, 2017, twice unanimously voted to approve the Superior Officers' CBA [contract] with no presentation, discussion, or explanation prior to the votes regarding the terms, cost, or financial impact of the agreement.

Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler testified under oath that, at the time of the votes, they believed the CBA provided for no pay increase in its first year, followed by 2% raises in the second and third years.

After Jajuga became Methuen's mayor, his office conducted a financial analysis that estimated the superior officers' salaries would actually rise more than 180% to approximately $440,000 under the newly approved CBA.

The circumstances required to properly invoke the Rule of Necessity did not exist with respect to the City Council's September 2017 votes to approve the Superior Officers' CBA because the City Council was not legally required to vote on the CBA at that time.

A quorum of councilors could have been reached without Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler. Thus, the Commission found that there was reasonable cause to believe that Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler's participation in the votes violated the conflict of interest law.

According to the commission letters, they chose to resolve these matters through Public Education Letters, (reprimand) rather than through adjudicatory proceedings, for several reasons:

(1) Atkinson, Jajuga, and Vidler relied in good faith on the city solicitor's advice in voting to approve the Superior Officers' CBA;

(2) prior to the CBA votes, all had a practice of abstaining from Methuen police matters;

(3) none were involved in negotiating or drafting the CBA; (4) the City Council unanimously approved the CBA and evidently would have approved it without their votes; and (5) all cooperated fully with the Commission's investigation.

Atkinson, Jajuga and Vidler each agreed to the issuance of the Public Education Letters and chose not to exercise their rights to a hearing.

The Commission has statutory authority to rescind or cancel an action taken by a municipal board if it finds through an adjudicatory proceeding that a conflict of interest law violation substantially influenced the action.

In resolving these matters with Public Enforcement Letters, the Commission did not conduct adjudicatory proceedings and did not find that Atkinson, Jajuga and Vidler's participation in the City Council's votes to approve the Superior Officers' CBA substantially influenced that approval. The City Council, which, without any substantive discussion, twice unanimously voted to approve the Superior Officers' CBA, evidently would have approved the CBA without the votes of Atkinson, Jajuga and Vidler.

The Commission encourages public employees to contact the Commission's Legal Division at 617-371-9500 for free advice if they have any questions regarding how the conflict of interest law may apply to them.

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Above Left: Holy Family Emergency Room Staff received thank you cards from children in the community. Above right: Justin Reddy, Clinical Leader of Holy Family Emergency room with his Valley Patriot. Photo left: Sharon Moran, Unit Coordinator, Sarina Matteo (ER-Tech), and Maria Selitto (N.P.).

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Merrimack Valley Hope Mission Turns Out 2,600 Masks as Group Adjusts to Current Needs

Tim Coco
WHAV.NET

Each day, 97.9 WHAV FM has been setting aside time to highlight good deeds from community heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read daily news updates on whav.net.

When public gathering rules stopped the Merrimack Valley Hope Mission from providing bagged lunches for the needy at Haverhill's G.A.R. Park in March, the group quickly switched gears, recruited "sewing angels" and so far has turned out 2,600 facial coverings.

Merrimack Valley Hope Mission founder Joseph D'Amore of Groveland and collaborator Robin Hudson of Merrimac brainstormed about how they could help five weeks ago—before the national spotlight focused on masks. They concluded nursing homes, visiting nurse associations and even the public would need coverings.

"We reached out to people who could sew and we asked them to start sewing. We also did ask people to donate supplies such as fabrics, thread and elastics and we organized into a really well-knit unit, no pun intended," he said.

Twenty-eight people went to work as the sewing angels. Another group—led by people such as Brenda Haskell of Groveland and Diane Andrews-Clarke of Andrews Insurance—went to work paying for and obtaining supplies. Haskell's own inventory allowed the program to launch and produce 1,000 masks in two weeks.

The effort first began supplying people in Groveland, Merrimac, West Newbury and Newbury before deciding to expand in the larger population center of Haverhill

"I was a little apprehensive because I know Haverhill is a big town and there are a lot of people who are going to need masks. Our sewers stepped up where they're sewing, literally, hundreds of masks," D'Amore said.

To serve Haverhill, he said he needed the help of Dee O'Neil, who is the administrator of the Facebook page Haverhill MA 411. O'Neil and her volunteers have handed out half of the facial coverings right from her home and delivered the other half, using "foot soldiers" such as Lisa Carter, Mary Melendez and Tracy Menzies-Kuver.

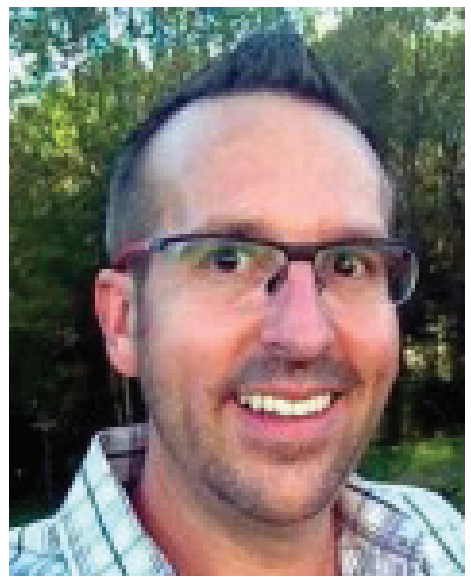
Among others who have made the effort a success are Eva Montibello, Helen Sheehan, Amanda Clemenzi, Ellen Kuchar, Barbara McHugh and Pentucket Regional School Committee Chairwoman Lisa O'Connor.

"Boy, this woman is literally sewing day and night. I mean, I see the early morning messages and late at night. She's going to end up creating 1,000 masks," he said.

Linda Daneau of Merrimac is another person who took on special projects. She is working on supplying the smaller pediatric masks. The group is working to distribute 150 masks for children, under the care of the state Department of Children and Families. The children need coverings because of their own medical issues or to make physician appointments. ◊

MA Republicans Launch Bids for Congressional Seats

Brian Genest
DRACUT COLUMNIST



Republican candidates in Massachusetts will be challenging the radical Democrats for their Congressional seats in the 2020 election. It can't happen fast enough, based on the group of far-left, tone-deaf incumbents. Across the state, GOP candidates with messages of change, accountability and support for President Trump will be going head-to-head with these useless seat-warmers. You do have Republican choices this year, even in allegedly deep-blue Massachusetts.

Tracy Lovvorn (MA-2)
https://tracyforcongress.com/

Business systems analyst and small business owner Tracy Lovvorn of Grafton is challenging Jim McGovern, a layabout who's been hanging out in Congress since 1997. She's the winds of change and a breath of fresh air.

"I am tired of being lied to by career politicians. I am done with allowing them to advance their personal agendas and careers, instead of working for us in support of our needs. I am exhausted from the dead-end political extremism in Washington DC that works to incite and divide us. It is past time to put an end to the nonsense of 20, 30, 40-year career politicians who have gotten rich at our expense and every 8 years they simply blame a new POTUS for their personal inabilities. I'm running for Congress to bring accountability and function back to this broken branch of our government."

Julie Hall (MA-4)
https://www.facebook.com/juliehall.us

After a 30-year career in the Air Force, retired Colonel Julie Hall is running for the seat being vacated by Joe Kennedy III, a useless hack trying to ascend to the U.S. Senate on his family's name and folklore. She is a much-needed about-face!

"In these times of division and disfunction, it is so important we look beyond our differences and seek out common ground and compromise that moves this great country forward. When we all work together, we can create solutions that make our lives better in every possible way. Let's walk together on this journey to repair our broken government and once again, put the needs of Americans first."

Caroline Colarusso (MA-5)
https://www.facebook.com/C.ColarussoMA

Stoneham Selectwoman Caroline Colarusso, a retired U.S. Postmaster and member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee, is looking to oust liberal extremist Katherine Clark. Colarusso is a well-known conservative and supporter of President Trump.

"For too long, the Massachusetts congressional delegation has been controlled by one party. I want to give you a choice when you go to the polls in November. 2020 has been an unprecedented year. Many of us have suffered great losses, but we still maintain our resiliency as Americans. We carry the American spirit. Americans want change in Congress, help me bring that change."

John Paul Moran (MA-6)
https://johnpaulmoran.com/

John Paul Moran of Billerica, founder of the nonprofit Grand Opportunity USA, will go up against Seth Moulton, the short-term, failed presidential candidate who exited the race stage-left, after being unable to make it onto the debate stage. Moran is focused on unity, liberty and opportunity for all.

"Our current U.S. Representative Moulton has done nothing for our 6th district except focus on obstructing and impeaching – and seeking higher office for himself. In contrast, I will tackle the most pressing issues facing the citizens of our district, state and country, including healthcare, education, taxes, the opioid crisis, sanctuary cities, public transportation, student debt, our veterans, the environment, protecting our Constitutional liberties and civil rights for all."

Rayla Campbell (MA-7)
https://www.facebook.com/pg/Rayla-ForCongress/

Thirty-seven-year-old Rayla Campbell of Randolph is taking on Ayanna Pressley, one of the four most left-wing, obnoxious, Anti-American members of Congress known collectively as The Squad. In case you need to know anything else about Campbell…

"I am a proud Catholic, African-American, Republican woman. I don't shy away from a challenge and I don't back down in fear. I love my country, which is exceptional. Our Constitution should be honored, valued, and upheld. Our leaders – particularly in Congress – should protect the rights of individual citizens, rather than serving special interests against them."

Helen Brady (MA-9)
https://www.facebook.com/Helen-Bradyma/

Helen Brady of Concord, Republican candidate for state auditor in 2018, will be on the ballot against Bill Keating, the double-dipping former district attorney who gets a six-figure state pension and $174,000 a year to obey Nancy Pelosi.

"Do we really like elections where the incumbent is unopposed? Given the current state of our country and uncertainty about the future, more than ever, we will all want more choices come November 3rd. I'm one of those people willing to ensure democracy is alive and well come Election Day."

— Brian Genest is chairman of the Dracut Republican Town Committee and a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex & Middlesex district of Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. ◊

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Burn. It. The. F**k. Down. - Ben Hunt

As of this writing, over 30 million are now out of work nationally, with nearly 750K right here in Massachusetts. We were already headed to a recession based on what the rest of the global economy was doing, and what the bond markets were telling us. The United States just had more fortitude, but indefinite growth is mathematically impossible, so here we are. Unfortunately, here and across the nation, political officials like Governor Charlie Baker and Mayor Marty Walsh doubled down. Using COVID19 as an excuse to deliver a deathblow to whatever might have been still standing.

Congress of course did their part, including The 3rd District's Representative Lori Trahan, along with U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren and Ed "from Maryland" Markey. They voted on a Bill that was trillions of dollars in bailouts. What really happened was the Bill was neither written nor read by the aforementioned Congress members, nor any others in Congress, it was written by industry lobbyists, Congress simply voted to pass it and of course President Trump signed it. A fraction of monies actually went into the pockets of The American People and small business, the majority went into the friends and donor classes. You were sold out. Again.

The Federal Reserve is doing their part. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell stated recently they only have "lending powers", but somehow are approaching nearly $6 trillion in securities on their balance sheet. Of course, they have been lending to Wall Street since October through their repo loan market to prop up banks, while at the same time claiming everything is fine. During this everything is fine phase, interest rates went to near zero, just not for the serfdom classes, which is you. The Fed tapped BlackRock Inc. to decide who will be bailed out via their bond purchases, you can bet once again it won't be you or your company. Want more income disparity? Well you're going to get it via Fed helicopter money.

Getting back to COVID19 and the policies implemented to fight it. To say that it was an abysmal disaster would be gracious. Especially if you lost a loved one in any kind of care facility, which make up over half of deaths. It's also the first time in U.S. History where politicians decided

to lock up healthy people, the folks that could actually be helping the economy instead of destroying it. It was a rational to think locking everyone up in February, but as data piled up, including daily goalposts being moved, there was zero reason to continue a shutdown. Protect the old and vulnerable, let the healthy get back to work. But here we are. Complete destruction. The cure in this case is in fact worse than the disease.

We continue to be sold out. Democrat, Republican, it does not matter. You can bet that "Party First" types will continue to cheer their politician of choice will always make the right decision(s) in the name of The Party. Meanwhile, over the decades our liberties continued to be restricted, our speech censored, our rights curtailed – The American People cheer for more. Happy that their elected officials continue to consolidate power and socialism for the wealthy few. Now on the cusp of a full-blown Depression, it is all that is needed to steal evermore from a broken and defeated populace. Will there be anything left to fight for? Maybe. There is some consolation knowing that firearms and ammunition are sold out across the country.

On a personal note, there's speculation that COVID19 was here long before. I believe it. I watched my mother gasp for her last breath on January 2, 2020. She was hospitalized for a minor injury, then placed in a short-term care facility for follow-up care. Two days later upon returning home, she was hospitalized, placed on oxygen, as her lungs filled with fluid, drowning, convulsing to grab even the slightest of breaths. The decision was made to start the morphine. Nowadays loved ones do not get to see the death, but that's how it happens. Will there be more who suffer the same fate? Yes. But you don't end the world for it.

Duncan Burns ◊

Illegal Alien in Lawrence Sentenced for Fentanyl Distribution

BOSTON – A Dominican national previously residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty and was sentenced yesterday for distributing fentanyl.

Erick Alberto Paulino Amador, 28, pleaded guilty to two counts of distribution of and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl during a videoconference hearing before U.S. District Judge Richard G. Stearns. Judge Stearns then sentenced Paulino Amador to one year and one day in prison. Paulino Amador will face deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence.

On two occasions in July 2019, Paulino Amador sold fentanyl to an undercover agent. Law enforcement officers arrested Paulino Amador in Lawrence on July 25, 2019, and he has been in custody since. A federal grand jury indicted Paulino Amador in August 2019.

This case is part of a coordinated enforcement operation in the Merrimack Valley called "Devil's Highway." The operation targeted the distribution of opioids, including fentanyl and heroin, and resulted in charges against a total of 40 people for federal drug offenses, with at least a dozen more individuals facing state charges.

United States Attorney Andrew Lelling and Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division, made the announcement. Assistance was provided by the Massachusetts State Police and the Andover Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles B. Weinograd prosecuted the case. ◊

Another Illegal Alien in Lawrence Pleads Guilty to Fentanyl Conspiracy

BOSTON – A Dominican national previously residing in Lawrence pleaded guilty today in connection with distributing fentanyl.

Angel Rivera-Valle, a/k/a Jose Antonio Serrano, 31, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl, two counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl, and one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl. U.S. Senior District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns scheduled sentencing for Aug. 24, 2020. Rivera-Valle will face deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence.

Rivera-Valle has been in custody since his arrest along with co-defendant, Andi Guerrero-Lara, a/k/a "Manny Sierra," in October 2019; he and Guerrero-Lara were subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in December 2019.

According to court documents, the defendants were members of a drug trafficking organization that regularly sold large quantities of fentanyl and operated in the Merrimack Valley area of Massachusetts. Between September and October 2019, an undercover federal agent purchased fentanyl from the defendants on six separate dates.

This case is part of a coordinated enforcement operation in the Merrimack Valley called "Devil's Highway." The operation targeted the distribution of opioids, including fentanyl and heroin, and resulted in charges against a total of 40 people for federal drug offenses, with at least a dozen more individuals facing state charges.

The charges of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and distribution and possession with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl both carry a minimum mandatory sentence of five years and up to 40 years in prison, at least four years of supervised release, and a fine of up to $5 million. The charge of distribution and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl carries a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to $1 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. ◊

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Arbitrator Reduces Suspension, Reinstates Methuen Cop After Ruling Him "Incompetent"

An Arbitrator ruled Thursday that Methuen Police Officer Arthur Hardy was "incompetent" in the way he investigated a shooting in 2018 but disagreed with former Mayor Jajuga's 270 day suspension of the officer.

The Arbitrator reduced the 270-day suspension to 60 days and ordered the city to give him back pay for almost a year that he has been out of work. The arbitrator also ruled the city has to pay him any overtime or detail time he would have made had he been suspended for only 60 days.

"The city did establish that Officer Hardy's actions on August 1, 2018 amounted to incompetence," the Arbitrator ruled.

However, arbitrator Shea said that the original suspension was reduced because: "The City did establish just cause to discipline Officer Hardy for incompetence [in violation of Rule 5.1 – Incompetence] and for his failure to submit a complete report. The City did not establish just cause to impose a 270-working day suspension."

POLICE MISMANAGEMENT?

Immediately after the decision was released to the public At-Large City Councilor Dave Beauregard said that the ruling proved that there was mismanagement in the police department.

"Arthur Hardy was found to have violated a policy of the Methuen Police Department. The question has always centered on the appropriate punishment for that violation," Beauregard told The Valley Patriot.

"The department's leadership originally wanted Hardy's employment to be terminated entirely, but Mayor Jajuga ended up reducing the recommended discipline to a 270-day suspension. The initial recommendation by the department, coupled with the discipline imposed by Mayor Jajuga, was an error. After Hardy's shifts were already filled by other officers in the months since he was initially suspended, we now have to go back to July 2019 and compensate Hardy for his lost wages and benefits as well as his lost detail and overtime pay. You asked why I used the word 'mismanagement.' When I see discipline imposed, upon a departmental recommendation, that is excessively harsh and not sustainable as the legal process plays out, I call that "mismanagement." When we start to count the costs associated with cleaning up yet another mess made by this department's leadership, the first descriptive term that comes to mind is 'mismanagement.'

"Any departmental actions that force the City to piss away taxpayer dollars counts as mismanagement in my book."
~ Councilor Dave Beauregard

The arbitration is only focused on one specific action - IE Officer Hardy's discipline."
~ Methuen Mayor Neil Perry

As usual, the taxpayers of Methuen are left holding the bag and keep getting fleeced time after time. I've had enough," Beauregard said.

"Any departmental actions that force the City to piss away taxpayer dollars counts as mismanagement in my book."

MAYOR DISAGREES

Methuen Mayor Neil Perry said he disagrees with Councilor Beauregard and pointed out that the arbitrator never addressed mismanagement in her decision.

"The Arbitration process indicates only that the punishment was too harsh. Her decision goes on to say there was "incompetence" [on behalf of Officer Hardy] but the city failed to prove the punishment was just. The arbitration is only focused on one specific action- IE Officer Hardy's discipline."

Perry said that his office is doing a "comprehensive audit of the Methuen Police Department as we will be doing with other departments - to separate fact from rumor and objectively assess our police department and restore public confidence."

Perry said that when the audit is done, he will review the objective findings and determine how to maximize areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Perry said that everything will be shared with the public.

BACKGROUND ON DECISION

The disciplining of the Methuen officer stems from his actions after a shooting in August 2018 whereby he mishandled evidence, specifically digging a bullet out of a wall, damaging the evidence and failing to properly report his actions on his police report.

Methuen Mayor Neil Perry was pressured by friends of Hardy on the city council to reverse the decision of former Mayor Jajuga.

Six councilors sent him a letter requesting that he put Hardy back to work, but Perry said at the time he wanted to wait until the arbitration was over.

"I'm surprised that the arbitrator found officer Hardy incompetent, but then would reduce the suspension so significantly," Methuen Police Chief Solomon told The Valley Patriot.

"However, I stand by the hearing officer's ruling and the mayor's decision."

"I appreciate the arbitrators work, and we are lucky to live in a country that allows an appeals process for any decisions made by the municipality when it comes to the disciplining of city workers," Solomon concluded.

Chief Solomon, originally recommended Hardy be fired, but Mayor Jajuga ruled a 270 day suspension was enough.

Solomon pointed out that the suspension was not his decision as he has no say over a mayoral level hearing.

"Under the city charter, the mayor is legally responsible for all hiring, firing, and disciplining of city workers."

Mayor Perry, who inherited the issue when he took office in January said that his office will calculate the back pay owed to Hardy in the next 24 hours.

"After hearing all the facts and evidence, arbitrator Shea issued an informed opinion, and the city will act pursuant to the award. This legal matter was well underway before I took office; I am glad it is now resolved so we can move forward."

MGL CH 31 section 41-45 states that before any law enforcement officers with 2 suspension (of 5 days or more) can return to duty he "shall" be reviewed by the personnel administrator and has to attend in-service training. ◊

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Chris Ansara of Methuen donated his time to Merrimack Valley Dream Center and handed out food to homeless and low income. Over 100 cars shows up."

Salvatore's Gets $1K Donation from LukeJackson to help support Easter dinner meals for the Homeless

North Andover — LukeJackson Benefit and HR Solutions made a $1,000 donation to Salvatore's Lawrence at Riverwalk, to help aid them as they cooked Easter dinner meals for the Psychological Center's Day Break Homeless Shelter in Lawrence.

"Ensuring vulnerable individuals in our community served by the Psychological Center have a warm, nutritious Easter dinner, and helping our business partner Salvatore's of Lawrence, whose staff has been seriously impacted with reduced hours, was an easy decision for LukeJackson. We are all in this together, and we hope that this will encourage others to help those who have been impacted by the pandemic," said Stephanie Messina Sewade, Partner and Executive Vice President of LukeJackson.

The Psychological Center, Inc. is a nonprofit agency with a long history of serving the Greater Lawrence community with quality and compassionate services designed for flexibility and growth. TPC offers a wide range of services through its three programs: Daybreak Shelter, Pegasus House, and Women's View, and is committed to serving individuals living with substance or alcohol addiction, mental health issues or homelessness.

"It is inspiring to be supported by and partnered with incredible businesses in the community whether the need is small or large. We are grateful, blessed, and honored that our guests are treated with respect and dignity by people who are concerned for their well-being," said Carina Pappalardo, Executive Director of The Psychological Center. ◊

Larry and his roommate Joe Griffin of New Jersey and an identified Airman

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

China, coming in 7th.

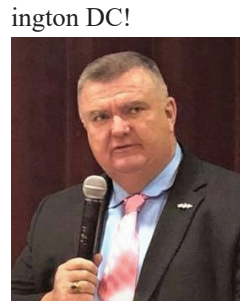
Later he coached the US Team at the Pan American Games. He is a 10th Degree Black Belt, the highest level in the sport.

While only a teenager assigned to the USAF crash and rescue crew at his base in Germany, Larry witnessed the crash of a Douglas RB 66 Destroyer, the plane had a three-man crew. Larry and his crash team witnessed two crewmen bailing out, watching their parachutes deploying, and to their horror, watched as a third crewman was killed when the plane exploded on impact. Another casualty of the "Cold War" with the Soviet Union and Easter Europe, a conflict which lasted from 1947 to 1991. The number of American serviceman and women who were killed or injured during the Cold War is exceedingly difficult to gauge. For political reasons, most were ruled as "training accidents". Consider this, the Douglas RB 66 Destroyer, was originally designed as a bomber, later repurposed as an electronic reconnaissance and electronic counter measures platform, was flying a mission in Europe at the height of the Cold War? To me, obvious that the three Airman were flying to observe the Eastern Block forces, and one of them died that day, defending our nation. After serving four years in the Air Force reaching the rank of Sargent, in Crash and Rescue, Larry returned home to Massachusetts.

Larry was born Larry Gagnon, after leaving the US Air Force, he legally changed his name to Larry Giordano, honoring the foster parents who raised him. Larry and his wife Eileen live in Methuen, the couple have three children Marie, Lonnie, and Stephen. The couple has been married for fifty-three years. They also have two granddaughters and two grandsons. During his entire marriage, Larry has operated the Methuen Karate Association, all four of his grandchildren are currently students.

On Friday April 24th, Larry turned seventy-five; his family and large circle of friends honored him with a parade past his home this past Saturday. These men and women who served in our military during the Cold War, are just as dedicated to our freedom and our nation, as the men who stood tall at the "Alamo" during Texas's struggle for independence.

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II and Korean War Veterans to call 603-518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC!



John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 23 years. If you know a World War II veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊

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TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

‘Little Fires Everywhere’

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Hulu’s ‘Little Fires Everywhere’ is a highly anticipated series adaptation of Celeste Ng’s 2017 bestseller starring Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington.

Washington co-executive produces the series along with Witherspoon, and plays Mia Warren, a character whose racial identity is never specifically announced in the novel. In the series, however, Mia is a black single mother who settles into Shaker Heights, Ohio, an affluent and very white suburb of Cleveland. Neither she nor her daughter Pearl (Lexi Underwood) are mistreated by anyone in their new community, at least not in obvious ways. On the contrary, Witherspoon’s Elena Richardson welcomes them immediately and with open arms, even renting her former home to Mia, and sending her second-oldest teenage son Moody (Gavin Lewis) over to help them get settled.

The Richardson family is wealthy and affluent with deep ties in the community. Elena is a local reporter and Shaker Heights native while her husband, Bill (Joshua Jackson), is a respected attorney. Their four children are students at the town’s best public schools.

Mia and Elena’s relationship is awkward. It started when Elena offered to give Mia a break on the rent if she would mow the lawn at the property. Then Elena makes it even more awkward by offering her a job as her maid, but of course calls it a “Home Manager.”

The relationship eventually turns from awkward to much more volatile when the two women’s teenage children practically want to trade moms. Mia’s daughter Pearl (Lexi Underwood) quickly becomes friends with the Richardson children and is sick of living in cars and changing cities every few months. She loves the home life of Elena’s kids. Meanwhile, Elena’s mutinous teenage daughter Izzy, who lives to piss off her mom, bonds with photographer Mia, and loves her chaotic lifestyle.

Mia is hiding some big secrets. Secrets that not even Pearl knows about. When Mia becomes too intrusive in Elena’s personal life, Elena does some digging of her own finding out Mia’s secrets and threatens to expose them.

The series is set in the 1990s where people are still going to the video store and buying newspapers. The school’s computer lab uses dial up. Elena’s book club is reading The Vagina Monologues. But the show could be set in the present day. Its themes, particularly those surrounding what defines motherhood, are timeless. The conversation around race and privilege are perhaps even more relevant today than the era in which the show is set. In one argument, Mia points out the difference between the two women: “You didn’t make good choices, you had good choices.”

.The series treats us to other “fires” going on in this ideal picket-fence community, and each lead actress plays wonderfully off each other. We see both sides of their relationship. Sometimes it seems like they’re having a moment together, others we see scenes where they’re rubbing each other the wrong way. Witherspoon and Washington’s performances carry ‘Little Fires Everywhere’ as the story unfolds and becomes more and more addictive over its 8 episodes. Their screen presence has the rare ability to make the mundane seem mesmerizing.

‘Little Fires Everywhere’ is available to stream on Hulu.

If you have any questions about TV you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column.

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Where is God in This?

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Greetings and God Bless you my friends in the wonderful and powerful name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Most likely some of you have been asking this question as the clock keeps ticking on and on in this season we find ourselves in. Where are you God in all of this? First, let me say that I am not God therefore I do not have all the answers or explanations of what is happening and neither do you. If there was ever a time to let God be God, it is now. It is not my job to figure out all the whys and therefores. But what I do know is what the Bible says and the Bible says He is with us! As it is written in Hebrews 13:5, "For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (NKJV) I believe this to be true because over two thousand years ago while hanging on the cross being suspended between heaven and earth, the Bible says in Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (NKJV)

Our Father God, The Creator of Heaven and Earth turned away from Jesus on the cross because there as our Passover lamb, our substitute He was dying our death! He received from God all our sins, sicknesses and diseases as stated in Matthew 8:17, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:" He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses." (NKJV) The Holy Righteous Judgment of God was upon His son who became sin so that we could know that at that moment we became the righteousness of God as stated in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For He [God] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (NKJV)

On account of this, you and I have been given the promise that our Heavenly Father would never and still will never leave us or forsake us! So where is God? He is with us and not going anywhere!

Jesus told us in John 16:33, "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (NLT) First he said that we will have peace in him, and we know that this peace is not like the peace spoken of in the world. Remember, John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (NKJV) The peace that the world provides withers away very fast. But Jesus' peace comes with no strings attached, and is limitless! Then Jesus says, "take heart". Other translations say, be of good cheer, meaning, exercise courage. Courage is strength in the face of pain or grief. What Jesus is saying is that while pain and grief from this world are starring at you right in your face, his peace will give you the strength to make it through to the other side of your situation. Then Jesus adds, oh' by the way, remember, I have overcome the world! The place that your pain and grief originated!

This reminds me of another situation recorded in the Bible where God told someone to take courage and that someone was Joshua right after Moses died.

God tells Joshua, in Joshua1:5-7, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go." (NKJV)

See, God is in the business of not forsaking His people when we need him! Plus, God gives us the necessary means to prosper and accomplish our journeys! We just have to believe that God means what He says and says what He means! In other words, trust him! Psalms 9:10 says, "And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You." (NKJV) Likewise Psalms 62:8 says, "Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge [meaning protection] for us." (NKJV) I trust this column has encouraged you to seek the Lord God and His wonderful Son Jesus Christ who have never, never left us or forsaken us!

Now if you have never made a decision to make Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior, pray this prayer after me. Dear Jesus, I invite you into my heart as my Lord and Savior. Up until now I have been running my life, now I relinquish lordship over my life to you and I believe that you were raised from the dead. I believe right now I am saved from death to life! Amen! Welcome to your new life, you are a new

BENEATH THE SURFACE

What Distinguishes Us from Animals

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT MORAITY COLUMNIST

One major thing that distinguishes us from the other animals is our sense of time and space. With other animals there is no awareness of past and future, or of here and there. To an animal, all that exists is what is within the range of its senses – the here and now.

This is because humans are persons, and persons are spiritual. We have an immaterial mind that is able to be aware of realities that transcend our immediate sensual experience. We know there is activity going on now in rural Mongolia even though we've never seen it. We know an old friend we haven't heard from in 30 years is doing something somewhere right now. Animals don't have this capacity. Their whole sense of reality is the immediate here and now.

Of late, however, humans seem to be depending more on what their eyes see and less on what our mind sees. In turn, people seem to be depending more on their feelings than on reason. As a result, our sense of reality has been narrowed more to the here and now: We are thinking more like animals than persons.

This tendency has arisen within a scientific age, and that could make sense since science experimentation is based on observation – the senses. The more we depend solely on our senses for understanding reality, the more we become like animals. If good science is not accompanied by good reason, it fails.

We all can think of numerous examples of people being stuck in the here-and-now, seeing but not comprehending. But nowhere is this more evident than in the most contentious issue of our time.

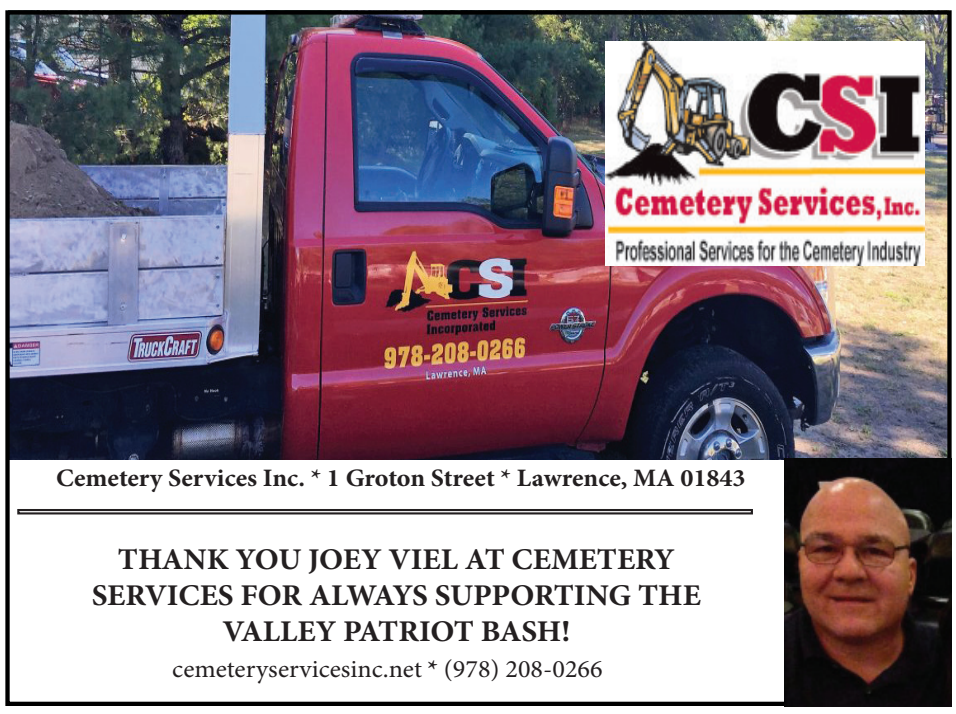
When I see a 2 year old baby, I don't only see a human being at his or her baby stage of life. I see a future child, adolescent, adult, and senior citizen in that baby. And I also see a fetus, embryo, and zygote. The baby is all of these – in his past and his future. In the here and now, my eyes just see a baby. However, my mind sees an entire lifecycle. This person's babyhood is but a very small portion of his or her potential as a human being. Likewise, when I see my grandmother, I see her whole lifecycle, beginning as a preborn child.

Murder is wrong not because it's violent or that it might hurt; murder is wrong because it disables a person from living out their potential; it steals their entire future. What could be more unjust than this?

And this is the great conundrum of our day: How many people when seeing a tiny embryo through ultrasound or other means of photography cannot seem to see past this stage of life? We know embryos are future toddlers, children, adolescents and adults, yet how many are stuck in the here and now, and willing to steal their entire future? Very perplexing.

When we deny that a person is an entire lifecycle of past, present and future, from embryo to natural death (and beyond), we think like animals. If we choose to intentionally kill a preborn human being or support others in doing so, we act worse than animals. The irony of choosing a pro-choice position on abortion is that while one attempts to dehumanize the preborn person, one actually dehumanizes himself.

Paul is the host of Beneath the Surface video and radio podcasts, he teaches college philosophy and theology, is a staff writer/producer for Church Militant, as well as a singer-songwriter-musician. Check out his YouTube page or his personal website at Paulmurano.com. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com



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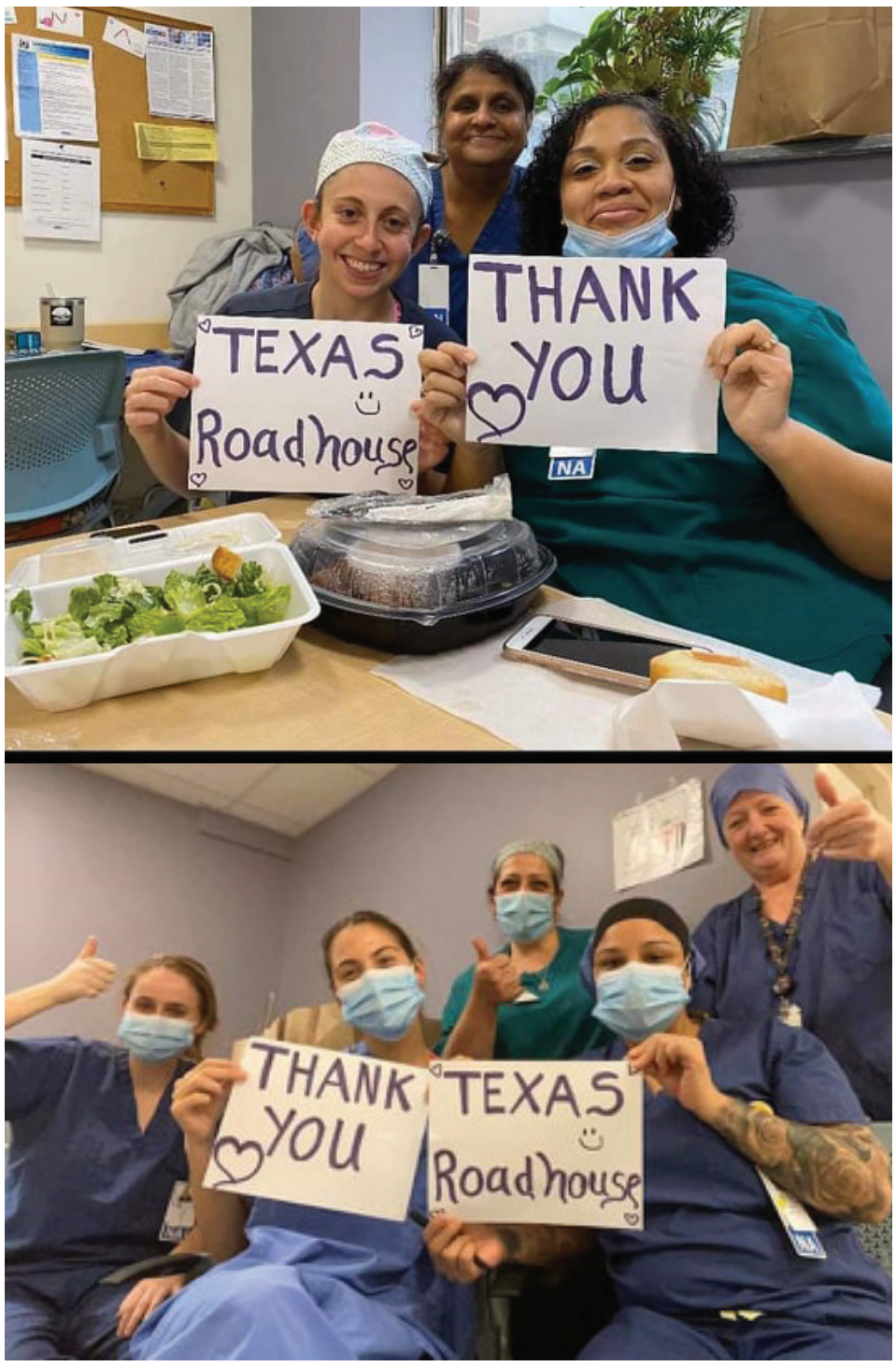
WHY SO MANY WHEN THE BIBLE SAYS ONE?

While nations, kings, philosophers systems institutions have died away, I engage the keenest of intellects and stand revered before the highest tribunals. I am assailed, defended and more denied than any other book the world ever saw. I survive all changes, and yet am unchanged. I move all minds and yet am moved by none. I see all things decay and yet am incorruptible. I see myriads of other books engulfed in the stream of time, yet I am borne along till time shall be no more.



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